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PREPARATION OF TEACHERS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

THIS is a hackneyed subject. In accordance, however, with the ever-fruitful laws of agitation, it must be discussed and re-discussed, until the men and women who are about to enter upon a profession whose responsibilities are incalculable and whose duties link us to the Great Teacher, shall study much and hesitate long before they pronounce themselves ready for the great work.

You have listened to the profundity of thought, the psychological laws of training, and the pedagogical arguments from a college president, a university dean, and a normal school principal, until there is little for a humble practical secondary educator to add without traversing the fields which have been so carefully gleaned. I bring you, therefore, no learned disquisition, no studied thesis, no exhaustive treatment of an exhaustless subject, but only a few homely truths, written in a hurried, homely way amid the wearing and worrying cares of an office which entails the supervision of fourteen high schools, over eight thousand pupils, and more than two hundred and fifty teachers.

One of the divisions of this subject which is attracting much attention, provoking much dissension, and bringing into view a startling array of statistics, is the ratio of women to men in the public schools of the United States. While this discussion per-

tains with special significance to the common schools, it is a factor which cannot be eliminated in the solution of the high school problem, and enters with irritating effect into our reflections as to the quantity and quality of those credentials, physical, intellectual and moral, which the welfare of our secondary schools demands of every teacher.

The storm-center recently has been in Chicago, resulting from a disturbance of the elements in the arraignment of the public schools in an eloquent post-prandial speech by His Reverence, the eminent Bishop Spaulding, of Peoria. He said, in substance: "Women are employed almost exclusively in our public schools, because their services are cheap," and added that the same motive would justify us in employing convicts as a still more frugal method of securing teachers. It was an unhappy illustration, and brought down upon the head of the distinguished and eloquent celibate the imprecations of nearly four thousand women teachers of Chicago.

Without any argument as to the difference in the qualifications (which I conceive to be radical and fundamental) between men and women as teachers in our secondary schools, is not the statement of the bishop absolutely correct, when we get down to the final analysis of the motive which prompts the employment of such an abnormal ratio of women in our schools?

It is a maxim in all other kinds of business that the best is the cheapest, but in securing teachers, boards of education seek to be justified in reversing this truth, and making the cheapest the best. Go where you will you hear it said, "we need more men, but we cannot offer the salaries they demand. We do not blame them for refusing to accept our small stipend, and therefore we are compelled to employ women." This is a true statement, and as sad, as degenerating, and as degrading as it is true, and therefore ought not the sex, which represents the pathos, the purity, the piety of this world, through whose nurturing influence the flowers of hope are made to bloom perennial in the garden of the heart, whose solace is a surcease of sorrow, and whose soul, instinct with the love of maternity goes out toward

childhood, to mould it through sympathy as does no other influence save the directly divine—ought not, I say, the sex to combine in their majestic potency to make this statement a libel rather than a truth?

You have doubtless seen in the series of articles now being written for *Harper's Weekly*, that in Massachusetts, of all its public school teachers 90.5 per cent. are women and only 9.5 per cent. are men. In Illinois 71.3 per cent. are women and 28.7 per cent. are men, and in your own state of Michigan 78.4 are women and 21.6 per cent. are men, while the average salary of men in Massachusetts is \$118 a month and of women \$48; in Illinois, men \$56, women \$46, and in Michigan, men \$47 and women \$33. I am one of those who believe that the same work performed with the same skill, and producing the same beneficent results should receive the same pay. I also believe that at present there are more men than women thoroughly well qualified to teach in our secondary schools, and that therefore the large ratio of women to men in these schools militates greatly against the quality of the work they ought to turn out, as the crown of our public school education and as fitting schools for colleges. To this extravagant and unfortunate disproportion of women to men among the teachers of our secondary schools, is due, in some measure at least, the lamentable fact that in our public high schools 75 per cent. of the pupils are girls, and that 75 per cent. of the boys preparing for college attend the private fitting schools where the male influence largely predominates.

Do not misunderstand me; I believe in the higher, the highest education of women. I am in hearty accord with her purpose and ambition to enter all the professions, all the trades, all the departments of industry. She is entitled to the right of way along every avenue where moral character is to be moulded, intellect developed or support secured. I only insist, and I believe my position is sustained by the divine will, by the logic of nature, and by the necessities of the age, that a parity of number shall be maintained in our high schools, that where education, experience and ability are alike, there shall be as many men as

women employed, and that there shall be no discrimination of salary based upon sex.

In view of these opinions, and in support of this position, it may be interesting to you to know that exclusive of the special studies as Drawing, Music, Physical Culture, French and German, and not including principals, there are employed in the high schools of Chicago eighty-eight men and eighty-six women, and including all departments, all studies and all teachers except the principals, there are a total of two hundred and sixty-one (261) of whom 127 are men and 134 women—and that Chicago among the large cities of the United States is entitled to the proud distinction of making no discrimination of sex whatever in fixing the salaries of the teachers in her high schools.¹

With this principle established throughout the country, this vexed question of salary dependent upon sex disposed of, we can approach the main question of the qualifications of secondary teachers in a broader spirit and with an eye single to the one thought of obtaining the best talent the market affords.

It is a trite saying that education is a primal qualification for those who would mould the pliant mind of childhood, and shape it into a character that shall bless the world by its influence, but education is a term which in our time is too loosely defined.

I have great respect for specialists who fill the measure of their days in investigation and research, seeking after and delving into the hidden things in the universe of God's thought, in the realm of nature. I honor the philosopher who spent his life upon the Greek Article, and in dying sighed that he had not given his years to the Dative case, but I would not employ him as a teacher of Elementary Greek in our secondary schools. We look to the laboratory and the cloister for those revelations which revolutionize scientific thought, and present to us the origin and development of psychical entities; we bow in silent awe before those who discourse with such eloquent and unlimited

¹ See statistics compiled by Superintendent Nightingale, together with replies to pertinent questions upon this subject of "Ratio of men to women" in the high schools on pages 86-98 of the February number.

verbiage about child study and the concentration, correlation and and coördination of the various branches of learning, but the student who gives his life to the laboratory, and the teacher who stands before the living child are two different individuals. The physicist and chemist who teach our youth should sit not only at the feet of Helmholtz and Leibnitz, of Faraday and Thompson, but at the feet of Homer and Dante and Shakespeare as well. The classicist who unfolds the beauties of Cicero and Homer should also be well-tutored in mathematics and science. Our colleges differentiate too early. Candidates for positions in our secondary schools should not commence a university course at their entrance to college.

I desire to make a plea for broad culture, symmetrical training, an all-around education in language, mathematics, science, and history, and for a persistent and never-ceasing study of English classics and English literature. For as President Eliot says, "The power to rightly understand, to critically use the mother tongue, is the consummate flower of all education." I believe in departmental work in our secondary schools as in our colleges, but the spire should be built on the top of a finished building, resting on solid foundations. One, then, who gives all his college life to a single subject, pursuing besides only those studies which are intimately collateral, may be giving full rein to a marvelous genius, and preparing himself to become a benefactor, in the discovery of some secrets in the physical or psychological world, which shall ameliorate the condition of humanity and hasten the millennium, but such a person deserves no place as a teacher of youth in our secondary schools. The education of a teacher should be first general, then special. I have seen it written, "All art seeks the highest form of expression for what it creates. The cathedral is the highest expression of art in architecture; the oratorio and symphony in music, poetry in literature and eloquence in oratory. As the human soul is God's expression of what is greatest in man, so that is the greatest of the fine arts which shall express the most of man's greatness. Knowledge in all its forms, is the marble in the quarry, or dragged

up on sledges a little away from the primeval mud. Literature is the subsequent statue, full of grace and snow-white in purity. Language then as the gateway to the soul's highest expression is the center about which all studies correlate." I would make language then, ancient, modern, foreign, native, the basic study for all who would become successful teachers. Upon these foundations laid deep and strong, I would build a superstructure, scientific in character, mathematical in correctness, historical in breadth, and upon this building poetical in its symmetry, beautiful in its proportions, richly plain and plainly perfect in all its inner furnishings, there should rise some magnificent turret, original in design and typical of a special genius, which shall tell to all around its exact location and for what it is specifically adapted.

The very minimum of preparation in scholarship should be a college education; an education general in character, removed at least four years from high school training; and where circumstances may permit I would add one year of resident graduate work along specific lines, and two years of study and travel abroad.

This education, however, to the real student, to the scholarly scholar, will be but a beginning of those intellectual possessions which shall be easily and delightfully acquired as the years unfold; but one who, having secured the meager discipline of a high school, attempts to acquire the knowledge and power sufficient for a secondary teacher, through university extension circles, Chautauqua courses, summer schools, normal schools and private study, will ignominiously fail to secure that kind of scholarship which the needs of our secondary schools demand.

The real teacher will always be a student. He will not spend his years in riotous living, his evenings in social pleasures, nor his leisure in flattering his own conceit by writing books for an already congested market. He will be furnished with an ever increasing library of his own, he will be a patron of the public library if one is at hand; he will be a social power in the community where he lives, the inspirational center of every lit-

erary circle, and more than a Delphian oracle to all the young people around him.

But, "pity 'tis, 'tis true," intellectual attainment, education, is only one of the essential elements of a teacher's equipment. You may call it the headstone of the corner if you please, but the headstone of the corner is only a small part of a great structure.

Much, I shrink from thinking how much, depends upon the temperament of the teacher. Many a school has been ruined, many a pupil's life has been spoiled, and the current of his activities turned into wrong channels, by some teacher, whose words, sharper than a serpent's tooth, have produced irremediable wounds. A dyspeptic, the victim of a disordered stomach, who enters the schoolroom under the influence of "an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an undone potato," is a maniac, and a patient public should insist upon his retirement. A cross, peevish, nervous, sarcastic, wizen-souled, torpid-livered man or woman has no business with the profession of teaching. To be a teacher, a guide, a trainer, a safe counselor of youth, one must be a paragon of kindness, patience and love; not a kindness that encourages disorder, not a patience that brooks an insult, not a love that borders on maudlin sentimentality, but a kindness, patience, love that are divinely given, divinely developed; these virtues, these graces, should be so enthroned in the mirror of the soul, so interwoven into one's intellectual attainments, that a company of youth sitting day by day under the benignant influence of such a character, would be moulded into such a oneness of industry, ambition and appreciation, that the memory of that teacher would forever be the Mecca of their deepest gratitude. While a pupil bright, industrious, keen in perception, quick in adaptation, appreciative, thoughtful, excites our admiration and tempts our best attention, it is rather the dull pupil, whose hereditary possessions are few, but whose application is diligent; and the indolent pupil, who has genius for all work but study, and has never yet felt the touch of a master hand upon his sleeping

talent; and the mischievous pupil, who is in a constant state of natural ebullition and whose intellectual fermentations find vent in most inopportune times, that call forth our highest talents, and test our real ability. These are the pupils that try our patience, and exhaust our kindness, and yet these are the pupils whose welfare demands the richest products of a most serene temper, and who will not brook either acrid words or an attitude of indifference, and the teacher will become the true teacher only as he secures the respect, wins the confidence and gains the absolute affection of the dull, the indolent and the mischievous, and these will only come as a result of an exhibition of patience and kindness which is only second to scholarship in a teacher's equipment.

The silent influences of nature are stupendous in their results. We see them in the blade of grass, the unfolding leaf, the bursting blossom. They are everywhere present, night and day, noiseless yet nurturing, producing all that is beautiful, and sad to say, all that is baneful. In the very breeze that fans us as we walk the streets may lurk the bacteria of disease as well as of health. It is equally true and equally demonstrable, and without the aid of a microscope, that every person carries with him an atmosphere of good or evil, and far more eloquent and infinitely more impressive than all his precepts and all his professions, is the silent influence of his daily example. Personal appearance then bears no insignificant relation to a well-appointed teacher. I do not refer to beauty of face, for sometimes upon the homeliest features there sit those qualities of soul that transfigure the person until "his face shall shine as the sun and his raiment be as white as the light." I refer rather to that personal appearance that manifests itself in tidiness of person, in neatness of dress, in grace of posture, in correctness of gait, in civility of manner, and in all those graces and amenities, whose silent influence will metamorphose character, and establish right habits in those who are to us as clay in the hands of the potter—but a teacher, I care not if his scholarship approaches perfection, who is careless of his personal appearance, slovenly in his dress, awk-

ward in his gait, boorish in his manners, whose taste for the graceful and the beautiful has not been developed, and who forgets that the way he sits and stands and walks, the way he dresses and addresses, is having a silent and incalculable influence upon the character, life and destiny of all his pupils, is not fit to be in the schoolroom. It is no place for cranks and dudes, for people of eccentricities and idiosyncrasies who take more pride in being unique and peculiar than in being civil and gracious. When one's instruction is such as to inspire confidence, then his every attitude will provoke imitation, so that the better the instructor, the more important is it that his personal appearance, his manners, his dress, his conversation, his every movement shall reflect the Christian gentleman.

Time permits me to speak of but one more essential characteristic of the real teacher, a gentle, well-trained, cultivated, mellow, musical voice, a voice so attuned to pleasing harmony as to attract the listless, stir the ambitious, inspire the thoughtful. A harsh, rasping, shrieking voice, the mouthing of one's words, carelessness and lawlessness of utterance are faults so glaring that their toleration is a constant surprise. There is no sense so acute as that of hearing, and it is through the ear rather than the eye that pupils learn the form and use of words. Poor spelling, the absurd application of technical terms, and the strange answers to questions set for an examination are often more the fault of the teacher than the pupil.

A distinct articulation, a clear enunciation, a proper pronunciation, the taking off of one's hat in respectful courtesy to every English word and to every syllable of that word is an all-important culture to one who would be an exemplar of the English language before his pupils. The reading of the English classics in our high schools is something abominable.

In our intense anxiety to teach literature we have abandoned all attention to voice culture, and while I would not sacrifice thought to utterance, they are to my mind inseparable when one is reading aloud. I am not arguing for elocution in its vicious sense, not for Delsarte in its excessive forms, but do I

contend that we shall not be able to cultivate a literary sense in our pupils, unless we are able to read literature with a full application of its emotional feeling, and awaken in our pupils such an appreciation of the style as well as the content, that they will be aroused to cultivate the ability to differentiate between the pathetic and the humorous, the didactic and the descriptive, in vocal expression as well as in thought comprehension, and not read the "One Hoss Shay" the "Sermon on the Mount," "The Death of Paul Dombey," and "Rienzi to the Romans," all in the same tone, with no stirring of the passions and no change of the features. This is all out of nature. The young woman standing at the bedside of a dying mother, the young man, with all his nerves at full tension contending on the football ground, will each show, in the play of every feature, emotions befitting the occasion, and it is quite unpardonable that in our high schools where there should be the freest exercise of the organs of the voice to insure not only good tone, but a healthy development of other physical functions, the natural should be so subordinated to the artificial, that we are forced sometimes to say that pupils seem to make progress in spite of their teachers.

In this honest but homely way I have presented some of the qualifications which I deem essential for those who would enter the profession of secondary teaching. Have I overdrawn the picture? Have I exaggerated the conditions? Do I exalt too highly the teacher as an exemplar of physical health, mental acumen, moral power? Can we be too erudite as those who are to guide, direct, control the mental trend, fashion the moral habits and shape the destiny of the youth of this generation? If, as Emerson says, "the true test of civilization is not the census, nor the size of cities, nor the crops, but the kind of man the country turns out," then as men and women largely responsible for this civilization, we cannot have our voices too thoroughly trained, we cannot be too careful of our personal appearance, we cannot have our morals and manners, and our relations to society, too nicely defined, we cannot cultivate too even a temper in all our methods of discipline, we

cannot enter the profession with a scholarship too rich, ripe and rare, nor improve upon it in our experience with too much reading, reflection and study. With all our faculties thus fully and ornately developed, we shall not only reap the reward for our diligence, and succeed as teachers in every present position, but we shall constantly hear from an appreciative public the welcome summons—"Come up higher."¹

A. F. NIGHTINGALE

CHICAGO

¹ This paper was originally presented at the meeting of the Michigan Schoolmasters Club, Ann Arbor, November 1895.